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SUBJECT: ACTING A/S PHIL CARTER,S MEETINGS WITH THE QATAR,  
CHINA, EGYPT, AND CALL WITH AU/UN JOINT MEDIATOR BASSOLE

REF: STATE 22067

¶1. SUMMARY: (SBU) In the aftermath of last week's International Criminal Court (ICC) decision to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Acting Assistant Secretary (A/S) of African Affairs (AF) Phil Carter held meetings with embassy officials from Qatar, Egypt, and China and also spoke with UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole by phone. A/S Carter specifically spoke to the USG concern over the GOS decision to expel numerous NGOs and solicited assistance from each country in pressing the GOS to reverse this decision. Each embassy responded that they would work actively to use their country's influence with Sudan to request this reversal. A/S Carter also used these meetings to encourage continued support for the Darfur Peace Process. For his part, Bassole assured A/S Carter that this issue is high on his priority list, but also noted that the NGO expulsion has the potential to severely undermine the progress made so far on the peace process. End Summary.

Meeting with Qatar Ambassador Ali Bin Fahad Al-Hajri

¶2. (SBU) A/S Carter met with Al-Hajri on March 5 to get his views on the current situation in Sudan involving the ICC decision, GOS decision to expel numerous NGOs, and how this affects the work AU/UN joint Chief Mediator Djibrill Bassole and Qatar have done to advance the Darfur peace process. A/S Carter expressed USG support for Bassole and the role that Qatar has played so far in the Darfur peace process.

¶3. (SBU) Al-Hajri stated that Qatar is pleased to have worked closely with the USG in Doha to achieve the confidence-building agreement between the GOS and JEM. A/S Carter and Al-Hajri agreed that all of the movements need to be included in any negotiations and A/S Carter highlighted both the important role of the Fur community as well as their current lack of engagement. He encouraged the Qataris to reach out to the Fur. Amb. Al-Hajri expressed the desire and need to work together so that the international community could speak with one voice. He stated that prior to Doha, all movements were contacted and invited to participate. Al-Hajri said that the next round of talks should start sometime within the next three months.

¶4. (SBU) With respect to the ICC's decision, Al-Hajri said that Qatar understands the issue of justice is important, but disagrees with the timing of the decision. Al-Hajri said that it is unfortunate that a number of NGOs have been expelled from Sudan, but that the NGOs should not get involved in politics. A/S Carter requested that Qatar use its influence to push Sudan to reverse its decision to expel the NGOs as this action is having a dampening effect on the Doha process.

¶5. (SBU) Amb. Al-Hajri emphasized that the Qatari Emir has now visited both Chad and Sudan to discuss the current crisis. All neighboring countries have a role to play in any further Darfur negotiations. The Chadian Ambassador to the U.S., Mahmoud Adam Bechir, and a Sudanese diplomat have met with the Qatari Ambassador about seeking the engagement of the USG to help mend Chad/Sudan relations. Al-Hajri stated

that Qatar recognizes the leading role that the USG plays in the world and stated that the USG will get whatever support it needs from Qatar.

#### Meeting with Chinese Acting Charge Xie Feng

¶16. (SBU) A/S Carter met the Chinese Charge Xie Feng on March 6 at their request and delivered the U.S. perspective on Sudan/Darfur after the ICC arrest warrant for Bashir. A/S Carter said that the U.S. saw no reason to support an Article 16 deferral of ICC action. He argued that ICC proceedings were something Khartoum would have to deal with, and that they also need to figure out a way to move forward on Darfur.

A/S Carter stressed that Sudan's expulsion of 13 NGOs greatly constrained engagement on Darfur. A/S Carter suggested that both the U.S. and China do what they could to persuade Khartoum to reverse that decision, which would prevent needed services from reaching IDPs not just in Darfur, but in the "three areas" and in Khartoum proper.

¶17. (SBU) Xie stated that China is very concerned over and feels uneasy with the ICC decision, both on its substance and its timing. China believes the primary concern in Darfur is maintaining stability and said anything that prevents this is a hindrance. Xie expressed China's disappointment over Sudan's decision to expel the NGOs. Xie encouraged direct dialogue between the USG and GOS as well as between the USG and China. He agreed that a broadening of the lines of communication is desired and believes that China and the USG can explore more cooperation even on issues where we differ.

¶18. (SBU) Xie stated that China will continue to talk to its friends in Sudan to persuade them to not engage in further risky behavior, to continue to cooperate on peacekeeping issues, and on CPA implementation. Xie does, however, believe that encouragement is needed from the international community. Harsh statements from the UNSC or the USG will push Sudan into a corner. Xie's final comment was that the Chinese Special Envoy to Darfur, Liu Guijin, would be happy to come meet with the new U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, once he/she is appointed.

#### Conversation with UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibrill Bassole

¶19. (SBU) At the request of UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole, A/S Carter called him on March 6 for a brief update and to discuss the current situation. Bassole said he had expressed his concern over the NGO expulsion to the GOS Minister of Defense General Abd Al-Rahim Husayn. Husayn claimed the GOS had conducted a study on the humanitarian impact of its decision and is taking measures to fill the gap the expulsion of NGOs would create. Bassole said he underscored to Husayn that the expulsion was a direct violation of the goodwill agreement in Doha which states the parties would refrain from harassment and guarantee the unobstructed flow of relief assistance. Bassole said he was concerned the rebels, especially JEM, might refuse to continue further discussions as participating in talks while their people are being targeted is a political issue for them. Bassole believes we could see a dramatic situation in the IDP camps in the coming weeks. He also stated that the Husayn is aware of that possibility.

¶10. (SBU) A/S Carter said the NGO expulsion could alter the character of US/GOS relations as GOS is dismantling the humanitarian structure in Darfur. He let Bassole know that without a change in circumstances, the USG may have to make a strong political statement, though we understand that we don't want to lead the GOS into further escalation. Bassole said he would contact the Qatari FM Al-Mahmood to see if it was necessary for the Emir to get involved. A/S Carter urged Bassole to press the movements to continue to negotiate and refrain from violence. He expressed the USG desire to engage all groups, especially the Fur. Bassole responded that he would meet Khalil Ibrahim (JEM) before he goes to Doha. Bassole explained he wants to go to Doha soon as possible to raise the NGO issue with the delegations.

¶11. (SBU) A/S Carter asked about other parties' participation. Bassole stated he had spoken to SLA/Unity's Abdallah Yahia and was planning on meeting with him in El Fasher. Bassole said that the GOS is ready to engage SLA/Unity in talks and that the next step is attempting to join JEM and SLA/Unity and bringing other parties to the table (note: Bassole plans to meet Abdulwahid El Nour March 12-13.). In response to the question of neighboring states, particularly Libya, Bassole said he is planning to go to Tripoli to push Libya to play a positive role as they hold strong leverage over all the movements. On the NGO issue, Bassole expressed that Egypt could play a positive role in engaging the GOS but not Gaddafi. Bassole was not optimistic of a GOS reversal; his view, the GOS perceived the NGOs as part of the international community's proxies who provided info that may have led to the ICC decision. Therefore, Bassole felt the expulsion was a survival issue for the GOS. Bassole encourage we press GOS to reverse its decision. A/S Carter agreed and reaffirmed the USG supports Bassole's efforts 150 %, urging him to inform us if there are specific ways we can assist.

#### Meeting with Egyptian Ambassador Sameh Shoukry

¶12. (SBU) A/S Carter met with Amb. Shoukry on March 6 at Shoukry's request as a follow up to a meeting between U.S. Special Representative for Sudan Tim Shortley and the Egyptian DCM Amr Ramadan two weeks ago. Amb. Shoukry stated that President Mubarak's last trip to Sudan to both Khartoum and Juba is indicative of Egypt's willingness to promote peace and stability in Sudan. However, he felt, there should be no surprise at the outcome of events since the ICC decision. He believes the GOS response provides Bashir local political support by taking strong nationalistic actions. Egypt has encouraged the GOS to be restrained and positive, which it was as they made the Doha agreement. That said, Egypt has been reserved in its comments on the content of the Doha agreement and recognizes it was done without much support from the neighboring states. It was "nothing to write home about" in Amb. Shoukry's eyes, although it was probably all that could be done at the time.

¶13. (SBU) Egypt's main goal now is to help Sudan regain some form of tranquility. To do this, according to Amb. Shoukry, the GOS needs space to absorb the effect of last week's decision. The NGO expulsion is detrimental, and yet, Egypt is not surprised at this outcome. Egypt believes that finding a way forward via an article 16 deferral would be a positive next step. Egypt recognizes the humanitarian aspect that the NGO expulsions causes and expects that it is possible for the GOS to move back a bit on its decision. Further, Egypt hopes that with the intervention of many partners, the GOS will see that it has made its point and decide to retract its decision. Egypt will provide whatever assistance it can by staying in touch with the GOS and advising caution and restraint.

¶14. (SBU) A/S Carter told Amb. Shoukry that the ICC decision should not steer the parties away from the issues of the Darfur peace process or CPA implementation even though the GOS decision to expel NGOs has had a negative effect on the rebels. The USG is hopeful that the Sudanese NGO decision will be reversed and has expressed this directly to the GOS. A/S Carter was emphatic that the USG is not interested in mere public displays but in actionable responses. A/S Carter and Amb. Shoukry also discussed a possible "Friends" group which could involve the neighboring states as well. Egypt was very positive towards the suggestion that the USG could engage in a U.S.-Sudan-UN dialogue and also liked the idea of a wider group involving neighbors. The Ambassador believed that the Sudanese could look favorably on a tit-for-tat involving an exchange of high level direct talks for a reversal or freezing of the NGO expulsion.